Canada

# CANADIAN COAST GUARD SHIP GEORGE E. DARBY

The GEORGE E. DARBY has added a new dimension to the Canadian Coast Guard's west coast marine search and rescue capabilities.

A former offshore oil rig anchor handling and supply ship, the GEORGE E. DARBY has the ability to work in B.C.'s rough, exposed coastal waters for extended periods and can carry out search and rescue operations with helicopters. She sails on four week patrols in the waters off the west coast of Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands, Hecate Strait, Dixon Entrance and Queen Charlotte Sound. She will normally remain in these areas year round with crew changes taking place on station and the vessel only returning to home port for annual refit.

The GEORGE E. DARBY is a proven high endurance, all-weather cutter, having worked on Canada's east coast drilling operations for eight years. Built in 1972 by Bel Aire Shipyards of North Vancouver, the ship was purchased by Transport Canada from Federal Commerce and Navigation Co. Limited, in January, 1981 for $4 million. She sailed from Halifax and arrived at the Victoria Coast Guard base in the spring where the job converting her for a search and rescue role began.

A major general arrangements conversion was carried out for $2.4 million by Vancouver Shipyards and was completed in February 1982. The GEORGE E. DARBY's machinery was given a complete overhaul, the accommodation was redone, the deck house was lengthened to provide space for search and rescue equipment and a first-aid facility; a sewage system was installed and storage compartments and the wheelhouse were altered for additional search and rescue communications equipment. As well, the bullrails on the cargo deck were modified to permit helicopter operations.

Special equipment was added for her search and rescue role, including communications and navigation gear, search lights, two 21-foot rigid-hull inflatable search and rescue boats, two 27-foot workboats/lifeboats, four inflatable life rafts, direction finding gear, additional fire fighting equipment and two 5-ton cranes.

The total cost of the GEORGE E. DARBY, including the conversion costs, was 6.4 million, about half of what a new vessel would have cost to build. Converting an existing vessel also significantly reduced the time to put an offshore search and rescue cutter into service.

The GEORGE E. DARBY began her life as a Coast Guard cutter in February, 1982, with two alternating crews of 16. Her two, 12-cylinder Ruston Paxman diesel engines each produce 2640 break horsepower giving the GEORGE E. DARBY a top speed of 14 knots. At her top speed and with a heavy load, she can remain at sea for up to 30 days, but at a cruising speed of 11 knots and light load, the GEORGE E. DARBY can carry out extended patrols for as long as 56 days.

She is the Coast Guard's largest dedicated search and rescue vessel on the west coast with an overall length of 56m, a breadth of 14m and a loaded draft of 4m. The GEORGE E. DARBY, which displaces 2169 tons, has a rated bollard pull of 85 tons for towing.

The vessel was renamed to honour Doctor George E. Darby, a Methodist and United Church medical missionary on the B.C. coast for 45 years. Dr. Darby began his medical mission at Bella Bella in 1945, rendering a service that is unique in the annals of the coast. In 1944, the Chief of the Bella Bellas bestowed his name — "Wo-Ya-La" or "The Highest" — on Dr. Darby. One the passes near the mouth of Rivers Inlet has been named Darby Channel in his honour. Dr. Darby died on September 1, 1962.

The CCGS GEORGE E. DARBY, formerly called the "Janie B", is the third of her type to be used by the Coast Guard as high endurance, offshore search and rescue vessels. The GRENFELL went into service on the east coast in 1978, and the JACKMAN began her Coast Guard duties in 1981. The MARY HICHENS, the fourth of this type, went into service in 1985.

**Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue Vessels**

| NAME | TYPE | LENGTH | BASE |
|---|---|---|---|
| George E. Darby | 600 Class Cutter | 56 m | Prince Rupert/Victoria |
| Racer | R Class Cutter | 29 m | Vancouver |
| Ready | R Class Cutter | 29 m | Victoria |
| Point Henry | 400 Class Cutter | 21 m | Prince Rupert |
| Point Race | 400 Class Cutter | 21 m | Campbell River |
| CG Bull Harbour | Lifeboat | 13.4 m | Bull Harbour |
| CG Tofino | Lifeboat | 13.4 m | Tofino |
| CG Bamfield | Lifeboat | 13.4 m | Bamfield |
| Osprey | Rescue Boat | 12.4 m | Kitsilano |
| Mallard | Rescue Boat | 12.4 m | Powell River |
| Skua | Rescue Boat | 12.4 m | Ganges |
| Teal | Launch | 12 m | Kitsilano |
| Swift | Launch | 8 m | Kitsilano |
| CG 039 | SRN6 Hovercraft | 14.7 m | Vancouver |
| CG 045 | SRN6 Hovercraft | 14.7 m | Vancouver/Parksville |
| CG 086 | SRN6 Hovercraft | 14.7 m | Vancouver |

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